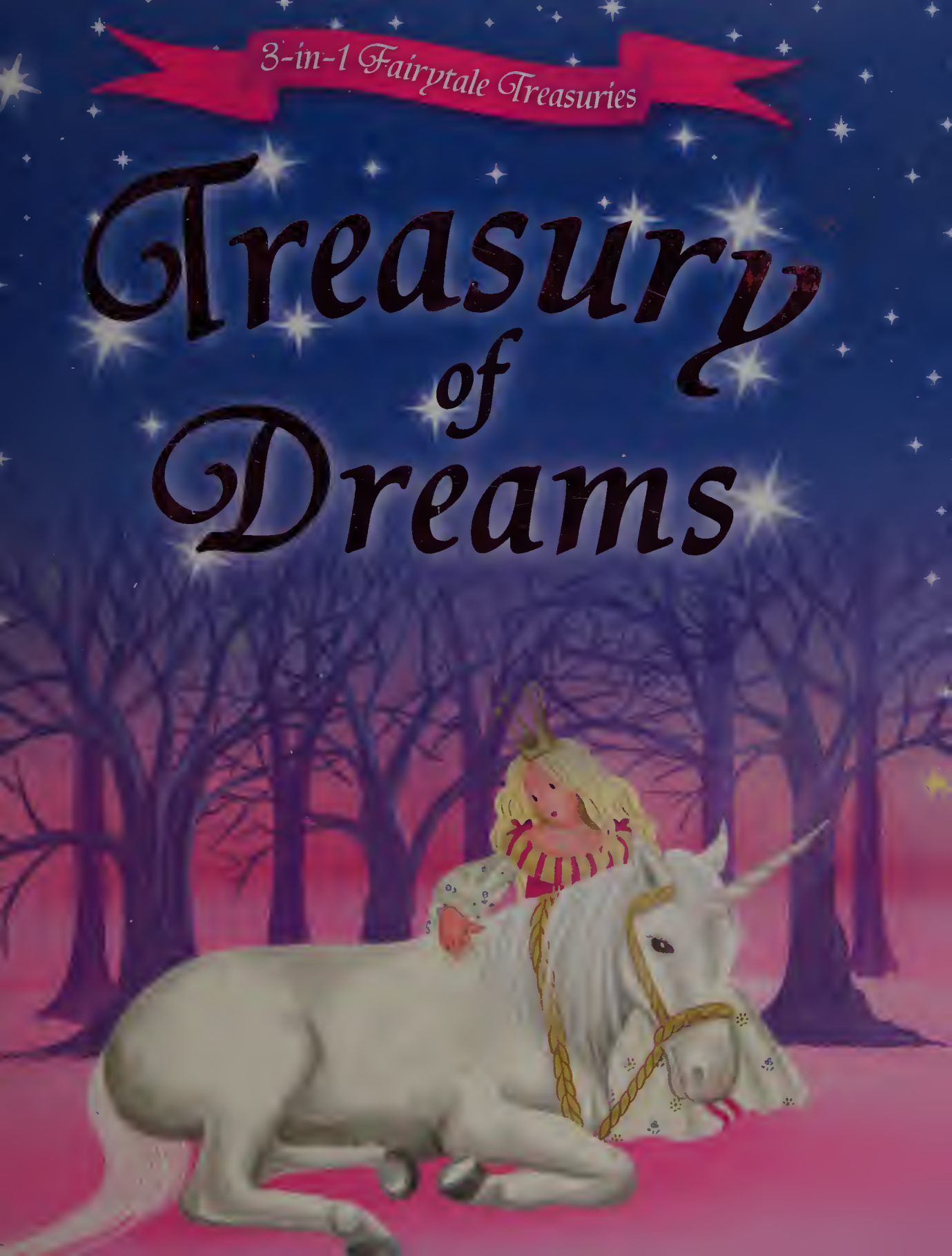
3-in-1 Fairytale Treasuries

Treasury of Dreams



This igloo book belongs to:
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Treasury of Dreams

Featuring The Mermaid Princess, The Little Match Girl and The Nightingale

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The Mermaid Princess

In the deepest part of the ocean, where the water is coolest and calmest, stood the palace of the Sea King. The Sea King lived with his six daughters. The youngest of the six Princesses, Ruby, was the loveliest, for not only was she beautiful, she was as kind and good as anyone could be. Ruby loved nothing more than listening to the stories her grandmother told about life above the sea.

"On your next birthday," her grandmother told her, "you will be old enough to go to the surface."

Finally, Ruby's birthday arrived. She woke up full of excitement – today she would be allowed to go to the surface! As soon as she could, she went to find out what life above the waves was like. Up and up she swam, until she felt the cool air all around her.

The sun had gone down, but thousands of bright stars twinkled in the ink-blue sky. It was the most wonderful sight Ruby had ever seen. Just when she thought nothing could be prettier, a great ship appeared.

It was covered in lights that were all the shades of the rainbow, music and laughter sounded all around, as the passengers celebrated and sang happy birthday to a young Prince.
Ruby swam closer and saw the Prince, he was very handsome – and Ruby imagined what it would be like to dance with him.
Suddenly, enormous storm clouds rolled across the sky, hiding the stars and the waves grew larger, hitting the ship like huge black mountains. The whole ship creaked and groaned until one huge wave tipped it over and water began to rush over its sides.

As people rushed to the lifeboats, Ruby saw the Prince fall into the rough sea.
He tried to swim, but his arms soon became tired. The Prince began to sink.
Ruby knew that she must save him and swam against the fierce waves to reach him.
She helped the Prince keep his head above water and allowed the waves to carry them to shore.

It was morning when the sea finally brought Ruby and the Prince to shore. Ruby stayed with the Prince for as long as she could, singing softly to him and letting the sun dry his wet clothes. It was only when she heard voices approaching that she returned to the water and swam back to her home beneath the waves.

As the days became weeks and then months, Ruby found herself thinking more and more about the Prince. She often swam to the spot where she had left him, hoping to see him again, but she never did.

"How I wish I could speak to him," Ruby sighed. "If only I were human... "

"But you can be, my dear," a voice spoke to her.

Princess Ruby turned toward the voice and saw that the Sea Witch had found her. "I can grant your wish," the Sea Witch told her. "Then you can find your Prince."

Ruby hesitated, her father had always told Ruby to stay away from the Sea Witch, but she longed to see her Prince again, so she agreed.

"Swim to the shore before sunrise and drink this potion. It will make you human and turn your tail into legs," said the Sea Witch, handing Ruby a violet bottle. "If the Prince falls in love with you, you can stay human forever."

Ruby was delighted.

"However," added the Sea Witch, "if he does not love you by the time the sun sets on the second day, you will become a mermaid again and you must serve me for the rest of your life. In exchange for all this, I will need something from you." The Sea Witch paused to think. "I will need your beautiful voice."

Ruby nodded her agreement, but let out a final cry as she felt her lovely voice disappear.

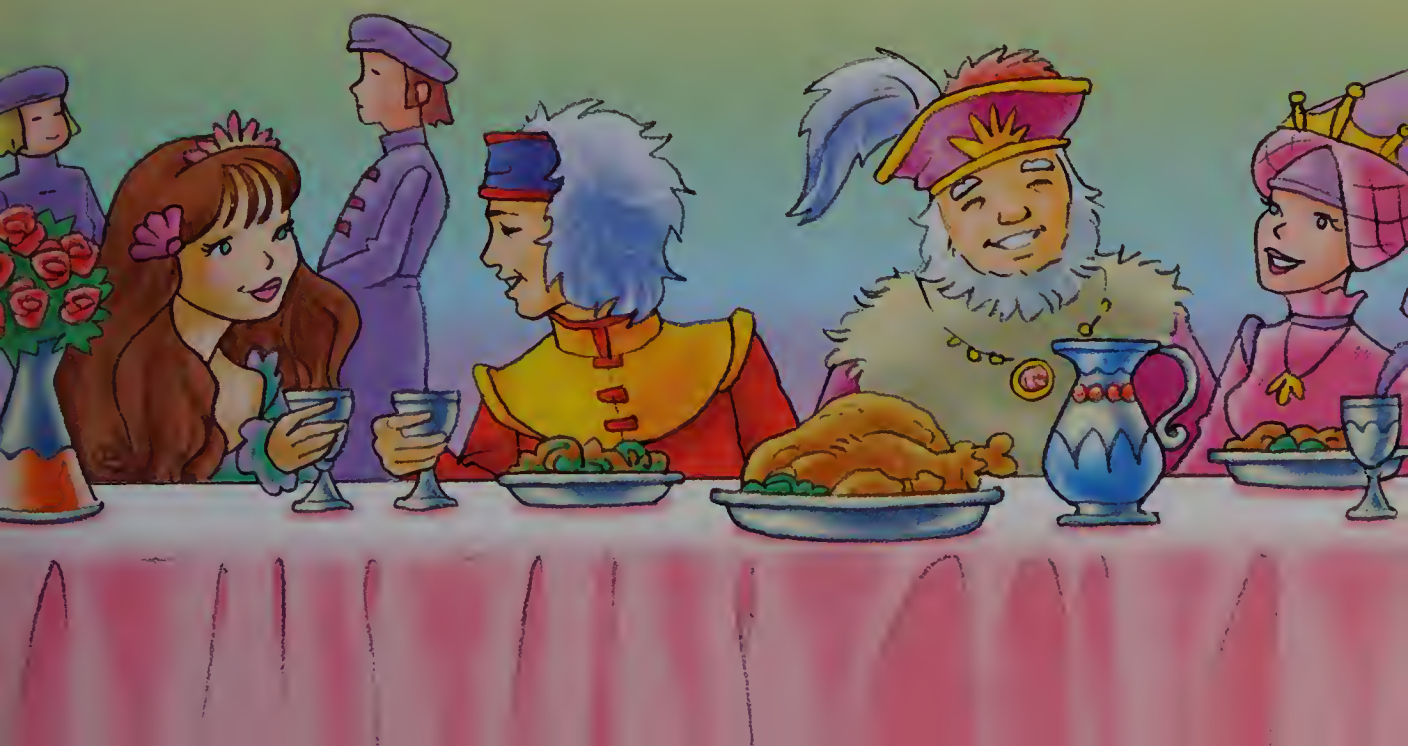
Ruby swam to the shore, curled up on the sand where she had left the Prince and drank the purple potion.

A strange tingling started in her legs and, as Ruby watched, her shimmering tail became a pair of legs, with toes that she could wiggle in the sand.

In the castle nearby, the Prince was staring out toward the beach and the sea beyond, hoping to hear the gentle song of the girl who had save his life. He could not remember her face, or her name, but her singing voice was the most wonderful sound he had ever heard.

Suddenly, he saw a young girl on the beach. She was dripping wet, as if she had just stumbled out of the ocean. At once, he sent a servant to fetch the girl, take her into the palace and make sure she was cared for.

"You are very familiar to me," the Prince told her as she sat next to him at the Royal Banquet table that night. "I feel I know you, but I don't know how." Unable to answer him, Princess Ruby just smiled. But her smile did not last long, because she soon heard that a Princess, whom the King and Queen wanted the Prince to marry, was arriving the next day. Ruby thought that her heart might break. Not only would she lose her Prince, she would have to return to the sea and serve the Sea Witch, never seeing her family again.



The sun rose the next morning and the Prince prepared to meet his future bride.
"I would like you to stay with me today," the Prince told Ruby. "I think that, with more time, I might remember where I have seen you before."
Ruby nodded eagerly. She wanted to spend more time with her Prince. She only had until the end of the day to make him fall in love with her and he was so close to remembering that she was the girl who had saved his life – she was the one he was searching for.
The Princess arrived and was shown into the courtyard. The happiness Ruby had felt just moments before was soon gone – the Princess was the most beautiful girl Ruby had ever seen. She had long, dark hair that fell in ringlets to her shoulders, big eyes that were a perfect blend of green and brown and her cheeks were as rosy as ripe apples against her snow-white skin. There was no way that the Prince could not love her. Trying to fight the tears in her eyes, Ruby ran from the courtyard and to her room where she cried with silent sobs.
Princess Ruby was stirred from her sadness by a knock at her door.

Cautiously, she opened it, to find the Prince standing on the other side.
"I cannot marry the Princess," he told her.
Ruby wiped her face.
"When I saw you run from the courtyard with tears in your eyes, I knew that it was you I loved," the Prince confided. "I have been searching for months for a girl I thought I might never find. She saved my life and all I can remember is her voice. I will not let a second girl go."
Then he leaned closer to Ruby and kissed her.
At once, the Sea Witch's spell was broken and Ruby's voice returned to her. She was so happy that she began to sing.
"It's you!" said the Prince. "You were the girl who saved me. That is where I know you from." He picked Ruby up in his arms and embraced her. "You are the one I have been searching for and it is you I wish to marry."

Princess Ruby and the Prince were married on a beautiful ship in the middle of the ocean. Guests at the wedding said that a school of dolphins watched the whole service, but Ruby knew that it was her family celebrating her wedding and that her wish had come true – Ruby would live happily ever after with her Prince.

The Little Match Girl

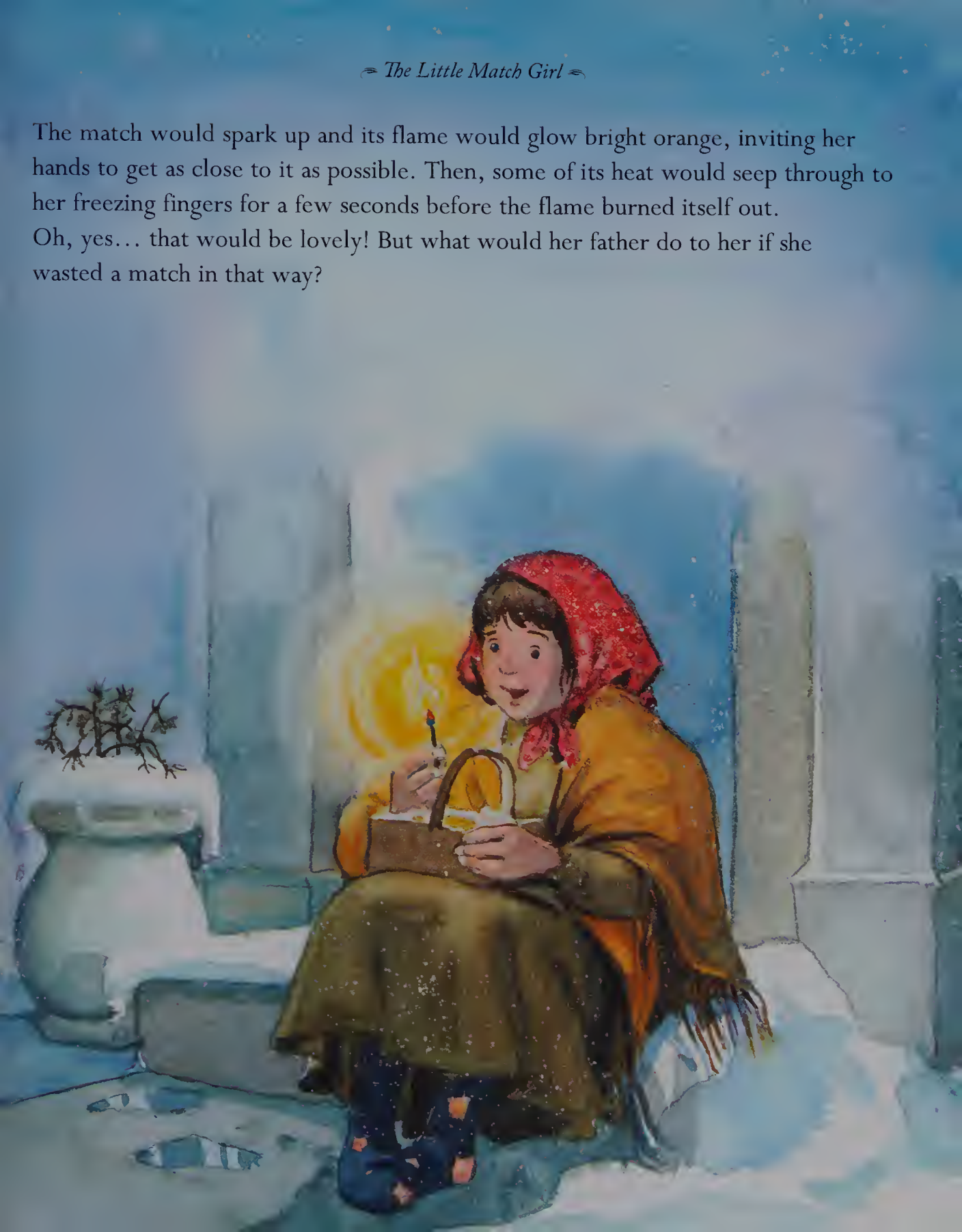
It was New Year's Eve. Everyone in the city was scurrying through the freezing cold snow to get home as quickly as possible. Everyone, that is, except the poor little match girl. She could not move quickly. She had no shoes and her little feet were turning blue from the cold. Soon, they would be frozen, and she wouldn't be able to walk at all.

She hobbled along as far as she could then, seeing a sheltered doorway, stopped to rest. Earlier in the day, she had lost her mother's slippers that she'd been wearing. Being far too big for her, the slippers had fallen off as she'd been running across a busy road, and a passing carriage had run over them. They were completely ruined, so she had worked all day in her bare feet, trying to sell her matches. In all of her short life, she had never felt as bitterly cold as this.

True, she had a roof over her head, but the walls of the tiny house she lived in were thin and had cracks so large that in winter, icy winds constantly blew through them. Anyway, it was impossible to go home yet. Her father, who didn't care for anyone, or anything, would beat her if she didn't bring back some money. And she hadn't sold a match all day.

She blew on her frozen hands, trying to get a little warmth into them.
If only she could light a match. That would be lovely.

The match would spark up and its flame would glow bright orange, inviting her hands to get as close to it as possible. Then, some of its heat would seep through to her freezing fingers for a few seconds before the flame burned itself out.
Oh, yes... that would be lovely! But what would her father do to her if she wasted a match in that way?



She looked around. The street was empty now. No one was there to see her crime and, besides, she didn't care any more what her father would do to her. She needed the warmth and comfort that the flame would bring. It was some time before her frozen fingers managed to get a match out of the box but, eventually, she managed it. The flame roared into life, lighting up the poor girl's haggard face.

Then something strange happened. A splendid scene of a roaring fire in a warm, cosy room appeared before her. If only she could stretch out her feet a little, surely the fire would warm them right through. But as she began to stretch out her toes, the match went out and the room and the glowing fire disappeared with the flame.

She lit another match. This time, it was as though the match had turned the solid wall next to her into thin gossamer and she could see right through it to the room beyond. She saw a large table groaning under the weight of beautiful, fine china and hot, delicious food. A big dish of roast potatoes steamed away, surrounded by smaller dishes filled with vegetables, stuffing and gravy. There was a massive chocolate cake covered in rich, sticky icing and, right in the middle of the table, sat a fine, roasted goose. The little match girl had never seen such delights. She tried to reach out and touch it. But as soon as she moved her hand towards the feast, the match spluttered and died. All that remained was the solid brick wall.

She lit a third match, hoping to see all the food again. But this time she found herself in a beautiful room sitting at the foot of a magnificent Christmas tree with hundreds of candles shining brightly on it. It seemed to the little match girl that all the candles were rising slowly into the air, lighting up the sky for miles. But then she saw that the candles weren't really candles at all. They were really stars twinkling in the heavens. She noticed that one of the stars had started to fall slowly away.

"When a star falls, a soul is going up to God," her grandmother used to tell her. Her grandmother had died some years before and the little match girl missed her dearly. She was the only person in her short life who had truly loved her.

She lit another match and rubbed her eyes in disbelief. Her grandmother was standing right in front of her, smiling at her from the middle of the flame. But, all too soon, the flame died out and the poor little girl was alone once more.

"No!" she cried. "I want to see my granny again."
She took a handful of matches and struck them all together. A huge flame lit up and her grandmother appeared again. This time, closer than ever.
"Oh, granny," cried the little match girl. "I am so miserable here. I want to be with you."
"And you will be, my child," said her grandmother, kindly. She reached out and gathered her granddaughter into her arms and held onto her tightly as they rose ever higher into the blazing sky.

The next morning, the frozen body of the little match girl was found in a shop's doorway. Scattered all around her dead body were the blackened ends of burnt out matches.
"Poor little mite tried to keep herself warm," someone said, sadly.
No one would ever know of the wonderful visions that the little match girl had seen that night, or how gloriously the angels sang when she and her grandmother rose up to God and entered the Kingdom of Heaven.

The Nightingale

Long ago, there lived in China an Emperor who liked to have only beautiful things around him. His palace was made of the most exquisite marble, his clothes were made of the finest silks and satins, his ornaments were made by the best craftsmen and his garden was the most glorious garden in his empire.

At the edge of the Emperor's garden flowed a river and on the bank grew a willow tree. Every evening at sunset, a nightingale would perch on one of its branches and sing its song to the sinking sun. Everyone who heard the nightingale's song thought it was the most beautiful sound in the world.
"If everyone thinks that this nightingale's song is the most beautiful sound in the world, why haven't I heard it sing?" asked the Emperor, angrily. "Bring it to me, immediately!"

All the courtiers and palace guards ran around the garden in a panic trying to find the nightingale, but the garden was so big and the nightingale so small, it was impossible to find. After three days of looking, no one knew where to find the little bird.
"You're all fools!" yelled the Emperor at his soldiers. "You're supposed to be the finest soldiers in the world and you can't even find a nightingale!"
"Excuse me, your Excellency, but I know where the nightingale lives," said a small voice behind him.

The Emperor turned around and saw that the small voice belonged to a little kitchen maid.

"He lives near me, close to the river," said the maid. "If you'd like me to, I could ask him to sing for you."

"I'd like that very much," said the Emperor, then collapsed in his chair, exhausted by all his shouting.

The little kitchen maid ran between the well-kept flower beds, over the small bridge on the lake and down through the soft, grassy meadows until she came to the river's edge.

"Are you there, nightingale?" she shouted up to the high branches of the trees.

"Yes, here I am," said the nightingale, sitting on a branch.

"His Excellency the Emperor would like you to sing to him tonight. What shall I tell him?"

"Tell the Emperor I'd be very pleased to sing for him," said the nightingale.

That evening, everyone in the palace waited silently with the Emperor to hear the bird sing. A window had been left open for the nightingale to fly into the room and a special gold cushion for him to perch on had been placed next to the Emperor. With a flutter of tiny wings, the nightingale entered the grand hall through the window, perched on the gold cushion, opened its tiny mouth and began to sing. It was so beautiful that some people fainted and even the strongest of the guards had to wipe away their tears of joy.

The Emperor couldn't believe that this most precious bird had been living in his garden and he'd never known.

"From this day on, nightingale," the Emperor proclaimed, "you will be a royal nightingale. You will have all the privileges a prince would have. You shall live in a golden cage and have your own servants to care for your every need. You will be able to take exercise, but you will not be able to leave the palace. All I ask is that you sing for me from time to time."

The nightingale agreed to the Emperor's request and soon became the most famous nightingale in China. He lived in great luxury and many people journeyed from far and wide to hear him sing.

One morning, a package arrived for the Emperor. It was a present from a friendly king. Inside was a beautiful toy nightingale that sang the sweetest song. It looked very pretty, as it was encrusted with diamonds, rubies and pearls. All the courtiers loved the toy bird. They thought it was even better than the real nightingale who would often tire after singing for a few hours. The toy bird could sing all night long. If it stopped, you just wound it up and it would start again.

The courtiers decided to hold a competition between the two nightingales to see which of the birds sang the best. The toy bird sang first. It sang for hours and, although it sang the same song over and over again, everybody agreed that the real nightingale would have to sing very well indeed if it was to beat the toy one. But the nightingale was nowhere to be found. Some of the soldiers in the courtyard below said they had seen it fly through an open window, away from the palace. The Emperor was very upset when he heard that the nightingale had escaped, but his courtiers told him that he was far better off with the toy one.
"It is far more suitable for your Excellency," they told him. "His song never tires and he is much prettier to look at."
The real nightingale was branded a traitor for leaving the Emperor's palace. In its place, the toy nightingale perched on the gold cushion each night and sang to the Emperor. And it sang for him for many years.

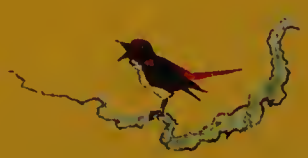
When the Emperor was old, he became ill and took to his bed. The only thing that gave him any comfort was the song of the toy nightingale. He had the bird placed next to him, so he could listen to it whenever he wished.

One night, with a sudden, strange clanking sound the toy nightingale stopped singing. Something was very wrong. The finest toy engineers were brought to the palace to try to fix it, but they said that the poor bird's metal parts were completely worn out. It was impossible to repair. The toy nightingale had sung its last song.

Without its beautiful song to listen to, the Emperor's health became even worse, and it was feared that he would soon die. One night, as he lay in his bed thinking that this night might be his last, he heard the most beautiful music. He raised his head from the pillow and saw the real nightingale perched on his windowsill, singing its beautiful song.

"You've come back!" gasped the Emperor.
"I heard you were very ill," said the nightingale. "I thought if I sang for you, it might make you feel better."
"Your wonderful voice gives me hope and strength," said the Emperor, who was already starting to feel better. "You must come and live at the palace again," he continued excitedly. "There is nowhere in the world where you would be better cared for. Then I could listen to your lovely song every day."
"I'm sorry," said the nightingale. "I cannot live at the palace again. It is not the life for me. But I would be happy to come to your window and sing for you every night, if you so desire it."
"Oh, I do, I do!" cried the Emperor. "Thank you, nightingale. You have saved my life."

And from that night on, the nightingale perched on the Emperor's windowsill and sang for him, every night. The Emperor became strong again and many people believed he became a kinder and wiser man.



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